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18 October 1958

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

Taiwan Strait situation: As the cease-fire is maintained, both Chinese Communist and Soviet propaganda commentaries are pointing to "political work" and "peaceful liberation" to regain the offshore islands and Taiwan.

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Poland: In an unusually confident speech to the Polish party central committee's 12th plenum on 15 October, Gomulka appears to have adopted a position closer to the Kremlin's on certain questions. He declared both the "revisionist" and "dogmatic" (Natolin) wings of the party have been brought under control and that the party has emerged from 1957's "confusion of internal differences" and now is fully capable of carrying on the "building of socialism." In publicly scheduling the oft-postponed third party congress for next March--after that of the CPSU in January--Gomulka has apparently acted in part out of deference to the USSR and in part out of a desire to be able to tailor policies and actions of his own congress to those of the USSR's congress.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Thailand: Marshal Sarit, leader of the ruling Thai military group, is flying to Bangkok from London, to deal with discord among his followers. Premier Thanom doubted his ability to handle the situation, and is said to have urgently requested Sarit's return. General Prapart, the ambitious interior minister, is believed to be the principal troublemaker.

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Lebanon: While civil life in Lebanon will probably return to normal with the vote of confidence given the Karami government, basic problems remain unresolved. It is doubtful that the mood of political reconciliation will continue long.

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DAILY BRIEF

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III. THE WEST

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France-Guinea: De Gaulle has decided to postpone recognition of Guinea for at least two or three months, during which time priority will be given to building up the new French Community. Although the French premier is said to be neutral on recognition of Guinea by other powers, some of his advisers who favor a tough line can be expected to continue trying to influence him to consider such recognition an act unfriendly to France.

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

Taiwan Strait Situation

The Chinese Communists appear to be adding a new feature to their propaganda which will, for the first time during the current situation, stress the "peaceful liberation" of the offshore islands. A Peoples' Daily commentator on 17 October called for "political work" among "compatriots" on Taiwan, the Penghus, Chinmen, and Matsu to help them "unite" with 650,000,000 Chinese on the mainland to recover Chinmen and Matsu as well as Taiwan. In commenting on Peiping's extension of the "cease-fire in the Far East," a Soviet domestic broadcast of 16 October declared that public opinion regarded the extension as another manifestation of Communist China's desire "to achieve the liberation of the Chinese islands by peaceful means."

Peiping delivered its "34th serious warning" on 17 October, alleging intrusion by two US warships into the territorial waters of the Pingtan and Matsu area.

A Chinese Nationalist spokesman has asserted that the Nationalist blockade of Amoy was abandoned in mid-July prior to commencement of the Communist bombardment of Chinmen. This appears to represent a modification of the stated Nationalist "port closure" policy of all China mainland ports, which has not been enforced against non-Communist shipping, however, for at least a year. The purpose of the announcement appears to be to demonstrate that the offshore islands are not a threat to the economy of Communist China and that Nationalist withdrawal from the islands would be of no economic advantage to the Communists.

Since 8 August, 14 radar tracks of apparent Communist high-altitude flights over the mainland have been recorded in the Taiwan Strait area--13 reported by the Chinese Nationalists and one by a US destroyer. One track reflected

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an altitude of 58,000 feet, six between 60,000 and 65,000 feet, and seven between 70,000 and 75,000 feet. The number of aircraft reportedly involved in each instance varied from one to eight. Plotted ground speeds ranged from 300 to 600 knots, with an average of 400 knots. These radar plots have

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coincided with [redacted] that FARMER (MIG-19) fighters and other more advanced Soviet jet fighters have been brought into East China. The movement of more advanced fighter types into East China would be a logical development in an effort to reduce the lopsided aerial combat score achieved by the Nationalists, but insufficient evidence is available to make any positive identification. [redacted]

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Gomulka Speech to the Polish Party Plenum

In his opening speech to the Polish party central committee's 12th plenum on 15 October, Party First Secretary Gomulka adopted a position which will be more to the Kremlin's liking than his attitude in the past on questions of ideology and internal party control. Gomulka reaffirmed Moscow's thesis that revisionism is a greater danger than dogmatism in contrast to his stand when he first came to power that dogmatism was the greater problem. He probably hopes thereby to assure the success of his forthcoming "friendship" visit to the USSR.

The fact that the oft-postponed third party congress, which Gomulka admitted had been delayed because of internal party conditions, now has been publicly scheduled for next March indicates Gomulka's confidence that he has more than adequate control over the party. He asserted that the party has already emerged from the "confusion of internal differences" and now is ideologically consolidated, stronger organizationally and politically, and fully capable of carrying forward the task of "building socialism." The date of the congress will permit Gomulka to tailor the policies and actions of his congress to those of the USSR's congress which will be held in January.

Gomulka made it clear that the party's main efforts now would be directed toward the "complete liquidation" of the revisionistic tendencies still to be found in universities, among scientists, in the theater and the cinema, and among writers, though this would not be accomplished by Stalinist-type measures.

Gomulka's speech indicates that he will soon attempt to put more effective personnel in the party's grass-roots apparatus and make it more responsive to control from Warsaw. In this connection, he drew particular attention to the political activities of the clergy in rural areas as a special problem to be overcome by local party organizations. [redacted]

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Continuing Discord in Ruling Thai Military Group

Marshal Sarit, the leader of the ruling Thai military group, is flying to Bangkok from London amid persistent reports of serious discord among his principal followers.

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[redacted] the military group is now split into two major factions, probably centering around Premier Thanom and Interior Minister Prapat, contesting certain key appointments in the cabinet and the military command structure. Thanom is also allegedly being pressed by his backers to force a showdown on the issue of corruption in the military group. [redacted]

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The two disputing factions seem about equal in terms of military strength, with the Thanom group apparently controlling the armored units and the Prapat group the bulk of the infantry units in the Bangkok area. Their approximate parity in terms of power minimizes the possibility of a surprise coup d'etat. Prapat, however, has shown a tendency to take ill-considered actions,

Sarit is likely to side with the Thanom faction when he returns and, while he is probably neither able nor willing to remove Prapat completely from the scene, he may try to reduce Prapat's substantial political and economic empire. He may also attempt to limit the influence of the elected members of the National Assembly. Sarit is known to have been considering a plan to alter the Constitution to reduce the military's dependence on the votes of the elected assemblymen, who have become increasingly obstreperous and demanding in recent months. [redacted]

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